

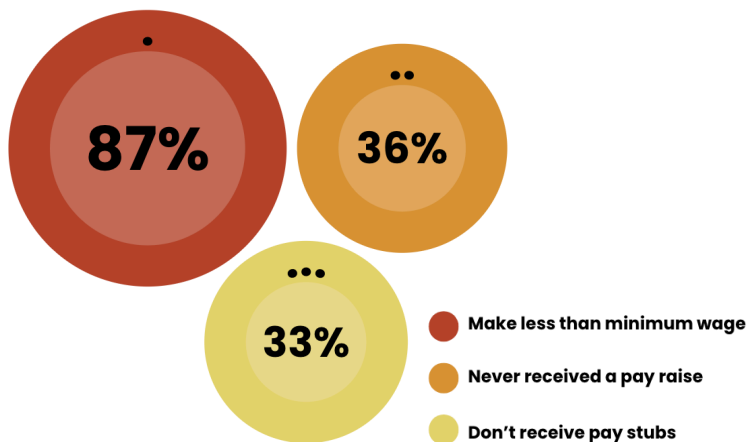
Labor and Housing Conditions on Vermont Dairy Farms 2024 Survey Results

In the spring and summer of 2024, Migrant Justice – a grassroots organization led by immigrant farmworkers – surveyed 212 Spanish-speaking immigrant dairy workers in Vermont. Surveyors were primarily current and former dairy workers themselves. Professor of Practice Clare Hammonds at the UMass Amherst Labor Center provided guidance on the development of the survey questions, its methodology, and the review and analysis of the data.

This survey provides a key update to previous research conducted by Migrant Justice and academic partners, including a 2014 survey of 172 workers on housing, labor conditions, and discrimination, and a 2018-2019 survey of 107 workers on health and safety issues. The results also come seven years after the implementation of the Milk with Dignity Program, a first-of-its-kind, worker-driven program to improve conditions and enforce human rights in the dairy industry. While conditions on farms enrolled in the Milk with Dignity Program are thoroughly documented in Program reports, this survey provides a window to better understand the experiences of workers outside the Program.

The survey is divided into 5 sections: wages, health and safety, hours, housing, and discrimination. The following are preliminary and partial findings.

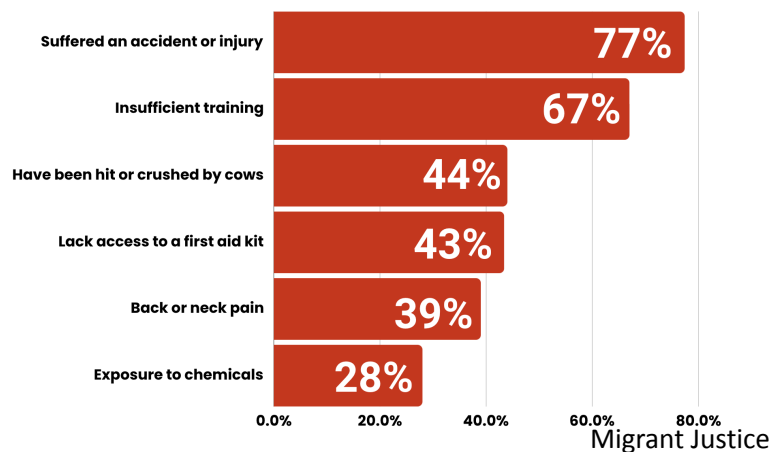
WAGES: Because agricultural workers are statutorily excluded from the right to a state minimum wage in Vermont, the vast majority of dairy workers earn significantly less.



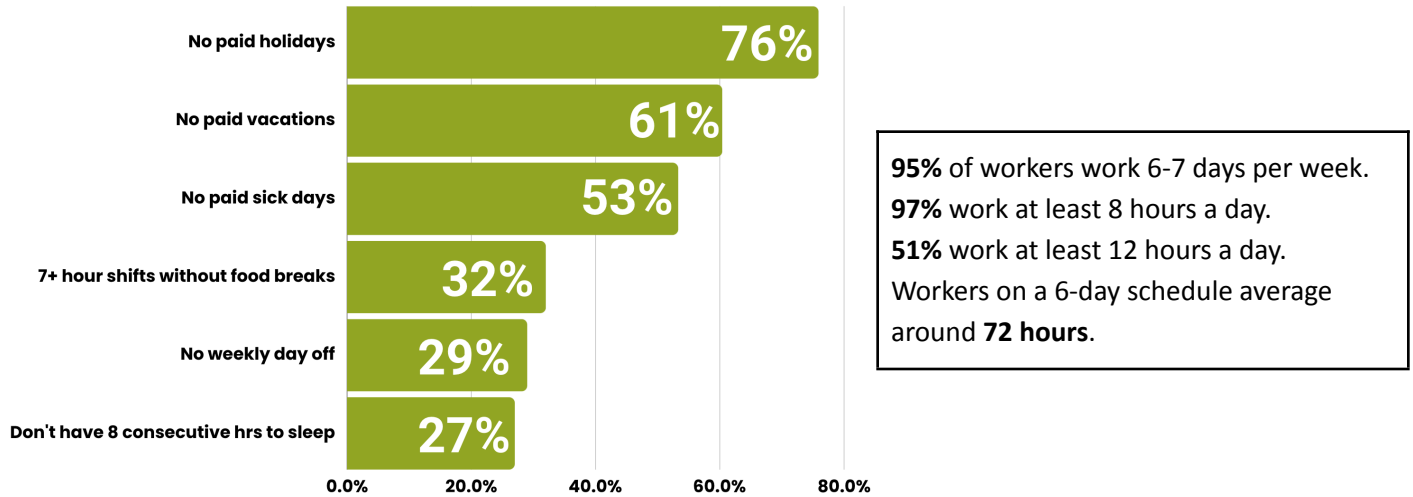
The median wage is **\$11.67**
 The mean wage is **\$11.75**
 Approximately **39%** of those who earn below minimum wage **earn less than \$10 per hour**. This is significantly below the VT state minimum of \$13.67 and represents the most vulnerable segment of workers. Another **29%** earn between **\$10 and \$13.67 per hour**.

HEALTH AND SAFETY: Health and safety issues remain widespread among farmworkers.

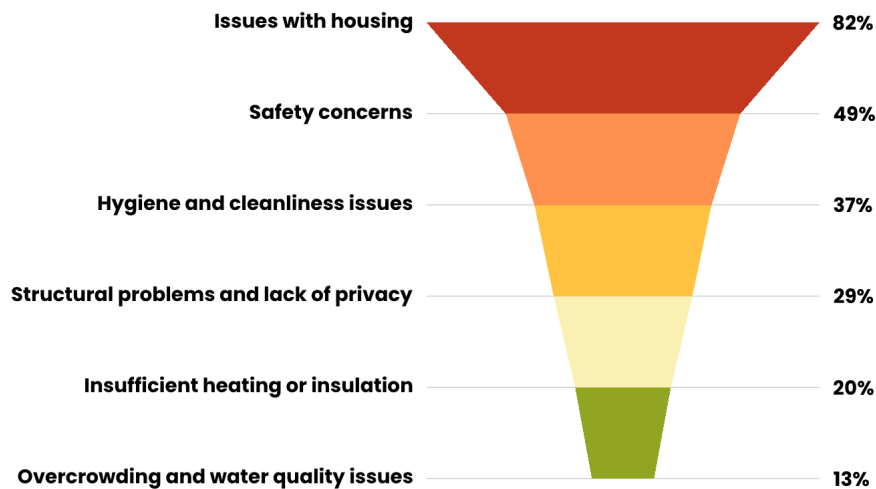
Most workers face accidents, injuries, and health issues related to work conditions. This results from a combination of lack of proper training, access to personal protective equipment, and the general lack of attention to dangers in the dairy industry.



HOURS AND LEAVE: Dairy farms run 24/7, 365 days a year. Many workers report long shifts with little rest. Workers are often unable to take time off to address their basic needs and few have access to paid holidays, vacations, or sick days.



HOUSING: Nearly all immigrant dairy workers live in employer-provided housing. Conditions are inadequate and unsafe for the vast majority of workers.



DISCRIMINATION: Many of the issues identified in this survey result from discrimination. The immigrant labor force is systematically excluded from legal protections and knowledge about their rights.

53% of workers report experiencing some form of discrimination, most notably because of their language (22%) and country of origin (31%).

